

REMARKS

Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration of the present application in view of the foregoing amendments and in view of the reasons that follow. Applicant respectfully requests that the foregoing amendments be entered at least because they place the claims pending for consideration in allowable form based on the indications of allowable subject matter by the Patent Office.

Claim 2, as well as withdrawn claims 11-19, 21 and 23 have been cancelled.

Claims 3-10, 20 and 22 have been amended. No new matter has been added.

Claims 3-10, 20 and 22 are pending.

Rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 112, first paragraph

Claim 22 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, first paragraph as failing to comply with the written description requirement. Claim 22 has been amended to address the issue raised in the Office Action, and applicant submits that the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 112, first paragraph have been overcome. Support for this amendment can be found at least on page 17, lines 2-7 of the specification.

Allowable subject matter

Applicant appreciates the indication that claims 3-6 and 8 contain allowable subject matter. Claims 3-6 and 8 have all been amended to be in independent form, and are thus in prima facie condition for allowance. Independent claims 20 and 22 have been amended to include features from claim 8, and based on the Patent Office's reasons for allowance with respect to claim 8 on page 9 of the Office Action, claims 20 and 22 are likewise believed to be in allowable form. Dependent claims 7, 9 and 10 have been amended to depend from claim 8, and are thus likewise in allowable form. Thus, all of claims 3-10, 20 and 22 are now believed to be in allowable form based on the indications of allowable subject matter by the Patent Office.

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. §§ 102 and 103

Claim 22 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. 2002/0022171 to Saito et al. ("Saito"). Claims 2, 7, 9-10, 20 and 22 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Saito in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,706,438 to Sahoda et al. ("Sahoda"). These rejections are moot in light of the cancellation of claim 2, and the amendments as discussed above such that all of claims 3-10, 20 and 22 are now believed to be in allowable form based on the indications of allowable subject matter by the Patent Office.

Applicant believes that the present application is now in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration of the application as amended is respectfully requested.

The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned by telephone if it is felt that a telephone interview would advance the prosecution of the present application.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any additional fees which may be required regarding this application under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16-1.17, or credit any overpayment, to Deposit Account No. 19-0741. Should no proper payment be enclosed herewith, as by a check being in the wrong amount, unsigned, post-dated, otherwise improper or informal or even entirely missing or a credit card payment form being unsigned, providing incorrect information resulting in a rejected credit card transaction, or even entirely missing, the Commissioner is authorized to charge the unpaid amount to Deposit Account No. 19-0741. If any extensions of time are needed for timely acceptance of papers submitted herewith, Applicant hereby petitions for such extension under 37 C.F.R. §1.136 and authorizes payment of any such extensions fees to Deposit Account No. 19-0741.

Respectfully submitted,

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